

17. RANGE EXTENSION OF SOUTHERN BLACKHEADED MUNIA  
*LONCHURA MALACCA MALACCA*

On November 2, 1998, a small flock of seven southern blackheaded munia (*Lonchura malacca malacca*) was seen among thickets of *Typha angustata*, in a nullah bed, nearly 600 m away downstream of Velania dam in Jhadol Tehsil, Udaipur district, Rajasthan. The flock was observed for five minutes from a distance of c 10 m. The munias were in black and white plumage, with white underparts. The flock moved along the nullah among *Typha* thickets.

Jhadol is situated in the southernmost part of Rajasthan near the Gujarat border. It falls in the high rainfall zone of Rajasthan, the average rainfall being nearly 600 mm per annum.

According to Ali and Ripley (1983), the subspecies *L. m. malacca* is found in the Indian

Peninsula from Raipur, Pachmarhi and Bombay south to Kanyakumari and Sri Lanka. But Jamdar (1998) has recently recorded this subspecies for the first time from Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur, Rajasthan. Bharatpur is in the eastern part of the state while Jhadol is situated in the extreme southern part. These recent sightings of this subspecies from two different parts of the state suggest a northward extension of its range.

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18. ADDITIONAL LIST OF THE BIRDS OF KANHA NATIONAL PARK,  
MADHYA PRADESH

Kanha National Park (KNP), situated in the Mandla and Balaghat districts of Madhya Pradesh, lies in the Maikal hills of the Central Indian highlands (22° 17' N, 80° 30' E). The total area of 1,945 sq. km comprises of the core area (940 sq. km) and a buffer zone (1,005 sq. km). Though the Park is well known for its abundance of large mammals and attracts thousands of tourists from all over the world, very little attention is focused on the rich diversity of birds. No serious ornithological field work has been done, considering its strategic location in the Satpuras, which are an important transit zone in Central India for migratory birds.

A systematic list of Kanha Tiger Reserve was first published by Newton *et al.* (1986). This

list also gives a brief account of the topography, habitats and climate of Kanha along with maps of the Park. It contains 225 species, including resident and migratory birds. The present study provides additions to the list of Newton *et al.* (1986). In all, 35 new species are added, mainly migrants or stray species, based on our field observations and records from December 1986 to June 1998.

The nomenclature and taxonomic arrangement follows Ripley (1982), but no subspecific identifications have been made. To give this list continuity with the earlier one (Newton *et al.* 1986), we have used the same abbreviations for habitat and migratory status.

Additional abbreviation used: (R): Banjar

river, which was frequently visited. The river is an important landmark, as it forms the southwest boundary of the buffer zone of KNP, (S): Stray species or stragglers; (EDC, RA): Initials of authors, given for specific records.

**Habitats:** (M): Valley Meadow, (Salf): Sal Forest with *Flemingia*, (Salb): Sal forest with bamboo, (Mx): Mixed forest, (D): Dadar meadow, (N): Nullah or Stream, (T): Open water or tank, (C): Buffer zone farmland.

**Migratory Status:** [R]: Resident, observed in every month of the year, [W]: Winter visitor, observed only between October and April, [w]: Winter and Summer visitor, observed only between October and July, [B]: Breeding, observed at nest, as fledglings or carrying nesting material.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

## ARDEIDAE

**Little green heron** *Ardeola striatus*: (N) [w] Surwahi nullah, April 1997. Also seen at Kisli anicut, Ganghar nullah in the first week of May 1997 (EDC).

**Black bittern** *Ixobrychus flavicollis*: (R) [W] Banjar river (Mocha) a solitary bird, March 1990 (EDC). Another solitary bird on Banjar river in March 1996 (RA).

## CICONIDAE

**Painted stork** *Mycteria leucocephala*: (T) [W] Phoota talao, Kanha. A single bird seen in January 1992. The bird stayed for 8 days only (RA).

**Openbill stork** *Anastomus oscitans*: (T, M) [w, B] Phoota Talao, Kanha, December 1998. Sondhar meadow March 1998 (RA). Sondhar tank, February 1998 (EDC). A large nesting colony of these birds exists in village Tarka near Bamhri Banjar (86 birds were seen in July 1997 with 31 nests; more nests were under construction). Nesting activity initiated around the first week of July; nesting observed in the same area since July 1987.

## ANATIDAE

**Greylag goose** *Anser anser*: (T) [W] 14 birds seen at Sondhar tank in December 1996. A flock of 34 birds seen again at Sondhar tank in December 1997 (RA).

**Brahminy duck** *Tadorna ferruginea*: (R) [W] A pair seen in Banjar river, Mocha, March 14, 1990 (EDC). Also reported by locals in winter, further up the river.

**Comb duck** *Sarkidiornis melanotos*: (T) [W] A flock of 14 birds seen in Bishanpur tank in January and February 1998 (RA).

## ACCIPITRIDAE

**Bonelli's eagle** *Hieraaetus fasciatus*: (M) [S] Soaring over Kanha meadows. 5 different sightings in January-February 1998 (RA).

**Booted hawk-eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus*: (M) [S] Only one sighting of an exhausted looking bird atop *Bombax ceiba* on Kanha meadows in January 1998 (RA).

**Greyheaded fishing eagle** *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*: (T) [W] Only one sighting at Shrivant, January 1994 (RA).

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*: (R, C) [W] One sighting in the buffer zone in Mocha village in February 1998 and also sighted once over Banjar river in Mocha (RA).

## TURNICIDAE

**Button quail** *Turnix tanki*: (Mx) [W] A dead bird found in Mocha village, possibly dropped accidentally by a bird of prey in January 1998 (EDC). Also a small flock in Mocha village was seen on January 31, 1998 (EDC). D'Abreu (1935) records it as a resident for erstwhile Central Provinces, now Madhya Pradesh (MP).

## GLAREOLIDAE

**Small Indian pratincole** *Glareola lactae*: (T) [W] 3 birds in flight over Rhonda tank, February 5, 1997 (Toby Sinclair, *pers. comm.*)

Both D'Abreu (1935) and Hewetson (1955) recorded it as seen on major river banks in central India. The bird appears to be a resident in MP, with considerable local movements.

## CHARADRIIDAE

**Little ringed plover *Charadrius dubius*:** (R) [w] Banjar river, Mocha. A small flock in March 1992 (EDC), a few birds also seen on Banjar river in March 1997 (RA). D'Abreu (1935) and Hewetson (1955) recorded it as a breeding bird for central India with fairly widespread distribution.

**Common sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*:** (N) [S?] Only one sighting in Kanha nullah on way to Link No. 09 in January 1998 (EDC). This is the only sighting of the species from December 1986 to June 1998. Definitely not a common visitor.

## LARIDAE

**Indian river tern *Sterna aurantia*:** (T) [W] Only one sighting near Kanha anicut in January 1995 (RA). Very rarely seen outside the Park, not as abundant and common as recorded by D'Abreu (1935) and Hewetson (1955).

## COLUMBIDAE

**Little brown dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*:** (M, C) [W] Absent in winter, but returns around March-April. Several sightings on Kanha meadows and in the buffer zone (EDC, RA).

**Indian plaintive cuckoo *Cacomantis passerinus*:** (M, Salf, Mx, C) [w, B?] A common cuckoo that arrives just before the monsoon (May). Heard and seen in the core areas as well the buffer zone. Sighted every summer from 1987 (EDC). Possibly breeds here in summer. D'Abreu (1935) records it as a resident bird for Central Provinces and states that the bird was observed with eggs taken from the nest of Franklin's wren warbler.

## STRIGIDAE

**Scops owl *Otus scops*:** (Salf, Mx) [W?] The unmistakable call is heard regularly in the night from March onwards. Rescued a chick from Kipling Camp in Mocha, buffer zone in May 1997 (RA). An adult bird was rescued from crows, near Kanha Museum, in May 1996 (EDC). Possibly breeds here in summer.

**Forest eagle-owl *Bubo nipalensis*:** (Salf) [S?] A single bird seen in dense sal forest near Sondhar in Mukki range in February 1994 (RA). Essentially a dweller of dense forest from Himalayas to northeast India and resident in the Western Ghats and southeastern Ghats. Perhaps this record from Kanha is the only one for central India.

**Spotted owlet *Athene brama*:** (Mx) [R, B] A resident pair seen in Mocha village in an old banyan tree. This pair was also seen with chicks in April 1991, sometimes near Khatia gate in the evenings, perched on overhead electrical cables (EDC). One sighting near Kanha meadows (RA).

**Mottled wood owl *Strix ocellata*:** (Mx) [W?] A pair was seen and heard during one winter November 1994 to January 1995, in Mocha village (EDC). This is the only record that we have around Kanha. It is very interesting to note that it is a resident around Bandhavgarh National Park, which is just a hundred miles to the northeast of Kanha, where it is seen throughout the year.

## CAPRIMULIDAE

**Common Indian nightjar *Caprimulgus asiaticus*:** (Mx) [w] Seen and heard in and around Morcha village in the summer, from April onwards. A bird with 3 eggs seen near Mocha village in May 1996, in relatively open, rocky land (EDC).

## ALCEDINIDAE

**Lesser pied kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*:** (R, T) [S?] A pair seen in Kanha anicut in February 1995 (RA). One bird seen at least on 4/5 occasions

around Banjar river in Mocha village. Seems to be fairly common in the jheels and tanks of Mandla district. Probably avoids heavy forest.

## MEROPIDAE

**Chestnutheaded bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti*:** (M) [S?] A flock of 8/10 birds seen in May 1994 at Bhapsa Behra meadows near Link No. 8/9 junction. Also seen in May 1995/1996. In May 1996, the birds stayed for more than 15 days (passage?). Not recorded by D'Abreu (1935) or Hewetson (1955) for Central India. This record from Kanha may be the first from Madhya Pradesh.

**Bluebearded bee-eater *Nyctyornis athertoni*:** (Salf) [S?] A single record of a solitary bird perched on a tree on Kanha Ghat in February 1995 (Shahid Ali, *pers. comm.*).

## PICIDAE

**Heartspotted woodpecker *Hemicircus canente*:** (Salf) [S?] A single sight record (Belinda Wright, *pers. comm.*). D'Abreu (1935) and Hewetson (1955), reported it as rare, found only in Bastar and Chanda in Central Provinces.

## ALAUDIDAE

**Short-toed lark *Calandrella cinerea*:** (M) [w, S?] A single bird recorded from Kanha meadows near Phatyak nullah on April 8, 1993 (Shahid Ali, *pers. comm.*).

## CAMPEPHAGIDAE

**Smaller grey cuckoo-shrike *Coracina melaschistos*:** (Salf, Mx) [W, S?] A pair seen near Kope Dhubri in sal forest on February 3, 1998. D'Abreu (1935) mentions one record from Chikaladhara. The present record from Kanha is perhaps the only one from Madhya Pradesh.

## PYCNONOTIDAE

**Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*:** (Salf, Mx) [S?] A single bird seen in mixed Sal

forest on Aurai road on February 3, 1998 (RA). D'Abreu (1935) mentions about one record of this bird from Chikaladhara. The present record from Kanha is perhaps the only record of this species from Madhya Pradesh.

## MUSCICAPIDAE

**Brown flycatcher *Muscicapa latirostris*:** (Mx) [w, B] Observed parents feeding two fledgelings in a nest on *Woodfordia fruticosa*, in May 1987 in Mocha village (EDC). Ripley (1982) mentions a disjunct population of the species in the Vindhya Ranges. D'Abreu (1935) records it as a resident.

**Pied chat *Oenanthe picata*:** (M) [W] A solitary bird often seen on Kanha meadows during winter. Recorded in December 1997 - January 1998 (RA).

**Smallbilled mountain thrush *Zoothera dauma*:** (Mx, D) [W, S?] Solitary bird sighted at Bijadadar on April 5, 1996. Another was seen at Bamhnidadar on April 6, 1996 (EDC). A passage migrant?

## NECTARINIIDAE

**Yellowbacked sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja*:** (Mx) [W] A regular winter visitor, but not many seen. A pair was sighted in February 1992; one male observed in February 1993/94/96. January 1995, February-March 98. Normally their arrival coincides with the flowering of *Woodfordia fruticosa* whose flowers are laden with nectar in the morning.

## EMBERIZIDAE

**Ortolan bunting *Emberiza hortulana*:** (N) [S?] A single bird seen on Patak nullah near Kanha meadows, in December 1994 (Shahid Ali, *pers. comm.*). Only a couple of sightings of this bird have been recorded so far from India. Ripley (1982) records it as a vagrant.

Most of the birds recorded were stragglers or rare winter visitors to Central India. No major

fieldwork was done, and most of the records are a result of opportunistic bird watching. Some of these birds have not been recorded previously by either D'Abreu (1935) or Hewetson (1955). Species recorded here but not mentioned by D'Abreu (1935) or Hewetson (1955) are given in the following table.

The sightings of the last six species in Kanha National Park given in Table 1 is of certain interest. The forest eagle-owl (*Bubo nipalensis*) is a resident of Himalayas, southern Western Ghats and southern Eastern Ghats, and inhabits dense evergreen and moist-deciduous forest (Ripley 1982). The present record is the only one from central India from a moist deciduous forest. The chestnutheaded bee-eater (*Merops leschenaulti*) is also a bird of the hills of the north and northeast India, Eastern and Western Ghats complex. But our recent records show that the birds pass through central India regularly in summer (passage migrant?), suggesting the possible migration of the northern population to the south during winter. The yellowbacked sunbird (*Aethopyga siparaja*) is another interesting record from Kanha. D'Abreu (1935) recorded it from Balaghat, and Hewetson (1955) never saw it anywhere in Madhya Pradesh (MP). Our observations show that it is a regular winter visitor from the Himalayas, possibly to

TABLE 1  
BIRD SPECIES OBSERVED IN KANHA TIGER RESERVE NOT RECORDED IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES BY D'ABREU (1935) [\*] OR IN MADHYA PRADESH BY HEWETSON (1955)[+]

Black bittern	<i>Ixobrychus flavicollis</i> +
Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i> +
Bonelli's eagle	<i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i> +
Booted hawk eagle	<i>H. pennatus</i> +
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i> +
Forest eagle owl	<i>Bubo nipalensis</i> +
Chestnutheaded bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i> +*
Black bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes madagascariensis</i> +*
Smallbilled mountain thrush	<i>Zoothera dauma</i> +*
Yellowbacked sunbird	<i>Aethopyga siparaja</i> +*
Ortolan bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i> +*

other places in east MP, apart from Kanha. D'Abreu (1913) published a note in the *JBNHS* on a bird he shot in Balaghat, as the range extension of the Himalayan yellowbacked sunbird (*Aethopyga seheriae*). The ortolan bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*) is definitely a straggler, as there have been only two or three previous records from India (Ripley 1982).

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19. *HEMIDACTYLUS FLAVIVIRIDIS* RÜPPELL FEEDING ON A GECKO EGG

According to Daniel (1983), and Tikader and Sharma (1992), the northern house gecko (*Hemidactylus flaviviridis* Rüppell) is primarily insectivorous. Occasionally, it is known to

become cannibalistic (Daniel 1983).

On April 22, 2000, at about 0730 hrs, a northern house gecko was seen by us on a bathroom wall in D.B.N. Hostel, University of